



Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities

Celebrating 31 Years of Leadership & Advocacy

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Sheila D. Wright

MINUTES OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

The regular meeting of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities was held on Wednesday, January 17, 2007, at Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 140, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Neal at 1:19 p.m. Introduction of Commissioners, Staff and audience members followed.

A special tribute was held in honor of Demetria "Dedie" Ward who worked for more than 20 years for the Board of Supervisor's Executive Office, Commission Services Division, in the capacity of Head Board Specialist. Mrs. Ward unexpectedly passed away on December 23, 2006 while vacationing with her family in Big Bear Lake. Chair Neal presented Commission Staff with an Adjournment Scroll for Mrs. Ward on behalf of Commissioners and the Board of Supervisors. The Outta Sight, acapella trio, dedicated the song "I See Through the Eyes of My Friend" in memory of Mrs. Ward.

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2006 MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Krzyzanowski, seconded by Commissioner Weller, and duly carried, the minutes for the meeting of December 20, 2006 were approved with the following correction:

. . . After further discussion on the matter, on motion of Commissioner Weller, seconded by Commissioner Troost and duly carried, the Commission's radio program, "Community Forum" will now be called the "Community Forum" "Disability Network."

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sandy Eisenberg – representing Total Recall, captioning services, reported that her company has been providing captioning services for the Commission on Disabilities for approximately 15 years. Ms. Eisenberg commented on a recent inquiry from Chair Neal about the feasibility of having “Total Recall” provide captioning services for the “Disability Forum” radio show that Chair Neal hosts on KYTM 1460 AM to allow the hearing impaired audience to partake in the program. Ms. Eisenberg further reported that currently “Total Recall” provides captioning services to Santa Monica City College. Captioning is done via internet connections onsite, or from a remote location using telephone line connections. Ms. Eisenberg advised the Commission that a similar captioning service could be provided to the “Disability Forum” radio program; and agreed to return to address the Commission on the issue at a future meeting.

Chin Ho-Lao – reported that he is the President of the “Outreach Committee”, a subcommittee under the umbrella of the Community “Advisory Committee” (C.A.C) for “Access Services.” The C.A.C advisory Committee’s membership consists of riders appointed by the Board of Directors for “Access Services”. The mission of the “Outreach Committee” is to conduct massive outreach to disseminate information about the transportation services available to the disabled community. Committee’s outreach plans include, attending meetings conducted by the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities, as well as other Disability Departments or Commission meetings held throughout the County of Los Angeles. The “Outreach Committee” also visits senior centers, community centers, retirement homes, adult day health care centers, and other organizations to disseminate information about ridership programs and also to bring back to the C.A.C information on the issues, concerns or problems that riders currently face while using “Access Services.”

Jessica Paul Martinez – Patient’s Rights Advocate with the Department of Mental Health expressed her concern for the lack of disability insurance coverage for Los Angeles County employees who become disabled by serious mental illnesses. Ms. Martinez expressed that to her knowledge, some mental illnesses such as manic depression and schizophrenia are not covered by most disability insurance policies. Ms. Martinez also expressed that she would like to see policy changes done to insurance policies to allow for this type of coverage.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Cont.)

Roxy Ortiz – representing the Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center (ELARC) reported that the ELARC is one of 21 regional centers in the State of California. The ELARC is funded by the California Department of Developmental Services. Regional centers provide services and support to individuals with developmental disabilities. In February 2007, the ELARC will host the first of two programs held annually, called the Professional Development Series Program. The program gives the ELARC staff the opportunity to receive external information on poverty issues that affect the disabled population; and also allows the ELARC to receive information on resources and services available to serve this population. Ms. Ortiz reported that Chair Neal will be a guest speaker at this event.

Donna Dougherty – shared information regarding prices for shuttle services to the Griffith Park Observatory. Ms. Dougherty also reported on the continued efforts by interested individuals to make the Griffith Park Observatory's entrance more accessible to the disabled community; and said that in an effort to pursue the issue, a Title 2 and Title 24 complaint will be filed with the Federal Government and the State of California. Ms. Dougherty reported that she received a letter from Mr. Robert Gorsky, ADA Coordinator for the City of Pasadena.

Linda Block – commented on the reporting for the December 20, 2006 minutes for the Commission on Disability. Ms. Block believes that the term "illegal alien" used by her when addressing the Commission under "Public Comment" should not be substituted with "undocumented immigrant" on Commission minutes; and feels that doing so, is an infringement on her freedom of speech.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Development of the Access Awards Committee

Chair Neal reported:

- The Committee members have agreed to recruit and select awardees for the 2007 Access Awards based on the criterion that the awardee be reflective of the Award received (i.e. Billy Barty Award should be awarded to an individual in the entertainment field, because Billy Barty was a famous actor).

CHAIR'S REPORT (Cont.)

- The Access Awards Tribute Journal will not have blank pages; blank pages will be used to include mini directories with contact phone numbers to be utilized as a networking tool.
- The Committee agreed to rename the "Access Awards Tribute Journal" to the "Access Awards Souvenir Booklet."
- This year's Bill Tainter Scholarship Application will ask contenders to answer questions about Bill Tainter.

Commissioner Krzyzanowski expressed that the 2006 Access Awards Luncheon served as a magnificent public service tool to promote the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities; and also increased public awareness on the disability community, their issues, and concerns.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Sandra Barbee, Division Chief of Commission Services for the Board of Supervisors' Executive office made the following announcements:

- Los Angeles County Commission for Women will host its 22nd Annual Women of the Year Awards Luncheon on March 22, 2007 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. If interested, Commission Services Division can be contacted at (213) 974-1431 for additional information.
- Commission Services Division will host its first quarter "Commissioners Orientation Seminar" on February 15, 2007. Invitations are being mailed to newly appointed Commissioners. If interested, Commission Services Division can be contacted at (213) 974-1431 for information or to request an invitation.

PRESENTATION BY PATTY SNOWFOX, HOUSING AUTHORITY CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Overview of the Housing Authority Planning Department

Ms. Patty Snowfox gave an overview of the Housing Authority, City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and reported the following:

- HACLA has jurisdiction over the City of Los Angeles, only.

- The County of Los Angeles has various housing authorities such as the Housing Authority for the County of Los Angeles, the Cities of Pasadena, Santa Monica, and Long Beach – each having jurisdiction over the city they serve. Each authority establishes its own policies and procedures.
- HACLA receives federal funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development; but it is not a federal department.
- HACLA has various departments within its structure that are each responsible for a specific function of the authority: Executive, General, Section 8, Planning, Housing Management, and Technical Services Departments.

One of the most important functions of the Planning Department is to monitor the passage of new legislation at the City, State and Federal level and analyze how it impacts HACLA. Based on changes in legislation, new policies and procedures are established by HACLA to maintain compliance. Another function of the Planning Department is to work in conjunction with other departments, like the Department of Public Social Services and the Employment Development Department, enabling departments to share information for clients serviced (i.e. the number of members in a family household or verifying family income). The Planning Department is also the ADA Coordinator for HACLA and works with many disability advocates to consult on issues of reasonable accommodation; and in order to develop ADA policies and trainings for HACLA and its clients.

Ms. Snowfox reported that a *“Notice of Nondiscrimination and Reasonable Accommodation Policy”* is included with every Section 8 renewal packet sent to clients. This form contains extensive information and contact phone numbers/TTY numbers to assist the disabled community. She also reported that HACLA makes reasonable efforts to make accommodations to those that seek the services.

Overview of the Section 8 Program

Ms. Lorraine Betts reported that the Section 8 program has been in existence since 1975 and currently holds approximately 44 contracts, assist about 93,000 adults and children; and has the participation of approximately 16,000 landlords.

The premise of the Section 8 program is to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing for low-income residents within the City of Los Angeles. Section 8 Applications are reviewed on a yearly basis; every year recipients have to file a new application and go through a review process. Upon review and acceptance of an application, vouchers are given to participants to subsidize rent expenses. The amount of a voucher a family receives is determined by the family size and the net household income. HACLA provides 70% of the rent expense and the applicant is financially responsible for the remaining 30%.

Due to the decrease of Federal Funding, HACLA currently holds waiting lists of approximately 29,000 household participants to be reviewed and processed for voucherizing.

Application, Certification, and Inspection Process

Angela Simon, Housing Inspection Supervisor reported that HACLA performs the following four types of inspections:

The first type of inspection is the initial inspection to determine the suitability of the unit to be in the Section 8 program. To ensure compliance with Housing Quality Standards, the unit is checked to ensure a hazard free environment. The inspector makes certain that proper locks are available, the electrical is in good working condition, plumbing is operating correctly, that the water heater is properly strapped, and most important, that smoke detectors are in place and properly working.

The second inspection is to determine deficiencies in the unit. The landlord is cited and a return visit is scheduled 25 days from the date of the citation to confirm that the needed repairs were completed.

The third inspection is conducted when a landlord has been requested to make repairs. The inspector conducts an inspection upon completion of the repairs, or when a house is found unfit to continue under the Section 8 program.

The fourth inspection is an inspection conducted when a tenant leaves the unit to determine if the unit was damaged by the Section 8 recipient. Thereafter, yearly inspections are performed, usually at the time of the application renewal process.

Ms. Simon reported that units are also inspected to ensure that the tenant is maintaining the unit in a safe and hazard free environment, making certain that all appliances are in working condition, as well as keeping the unit clutter free.

Complaint Process with HA

Ms. Snowfox reported that lodging complaints with HACLA can be done by placing a call to HACLA. Contact numbers are listed on the *“Notice of Nondiscrimination and Reasonable Accommodation Policy.”* Ms. Snowfox added that if a problem exists between the participant and HACLA inspectors, the inspector’s supervisor may be contacted in an effort to resolve the problem and provided the following contact phone numbers: ADA Accommodations, (213) 252-5313 and 501 Hotline, (213) 252-1879.

Chair Neal and Commissioners posed the following questions to HACLA staff:

- What happens to HACLA’s application waiting lists?
- Do all application packets come with a *“Notice of Nondiscrimination and Reasonable Accommodation Policy?”*
- Does HACLA prioritize applications based on amount of income of applicants have? Does HACLA give priority to applicants that have fewer earnings as opposed to applicants with greater earnings?
- How does an applicant lodge a complaint about a HACLA inspector?

After a question and answer forum, Chair Neal thanked the HACLA representatives for their informative presentation and asked if HACLA representatives could return at a future meeting to give the Commission an update on HACLA developments.

**APPROVAL TO REIMBURSE CHAIR FROM THE COMMISSION ON
DISABILITIES' TRUST FUND FOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENT FOR
DEMETRIA "DEDIE" WARD**

On motion of Commissioner Welt, seconded by Commissioner Krzyzanowski, and duly carried, the Commission approved to reimburse to Chair Janet A. Neal the amount of \$150 from the Commission's Trust Fund for the purchase of a flower arrangement for Ms. Demetria "Dedie" Ward.

OLD BUSINESS

Approve letter to the Board of Supervisors requesting a status report on the closure of Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center

OLD BUSINESS (Cont.)

On motion of Commissioner Welt, seconded by Commissioner Weller, and duly carried, the Commission approved to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors requesting a status report on the Closure of Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center.

Approve follow-up presentation by Ms. Magali Williams, Administrator, In Home Support Services (IHSS) Quality

On motion of Commissioner Welt, seconded by Chair Neal, and unanimously carried, the Commission approved a follow-up presentation by Ms. Magali Williams, Administrator with In Home Support Services (IHSS) Quality.

**ITEMS NOT ON THE POSTED AGENDA FOR CONSIDERATION FOR
PLACEMENT ON A FUTURE AGENDA**

Commissioners Krzyzanowski and Troost requested that the following items be placed on a future agenda for review and discussion:

- Visit/Presentation by Jessica Paul Martinez, Patients Rights Advocate to discuss Disability Insurance for mental health patients
- Visit/Presentation by Sandy Eisenberg, Total Recall to discuss new technology used for captioning services
- Visit/Presentation by Ms. Cyndi Ryan, Coordinator-In-Charge, Special Services, Los Angeles County Office of Education

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Krzyzanowski announced that the Commission's next Public Relations Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 20, 2007. Commissioner Krzyzanowski encouraged Commissioners and members of the audience to assist each other to disseminate information about their activities and events relating to disability issues.

Commissioner Welt announced that she recently acquired a new wheelchair with state of the art technology that helps individuals with missing limbs the capability of being more independent. She also announced that since her acquisition of this wheelchair, interested individuals have contacted her vendor to inquire about the wheelchair.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Cont.)

Chair Neal announced that the Los Angeles County Office of Protocol will host a visit from a Russian Delegation on January 24, 2007 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. Chair Neal announced that she was invited by the Office of Protocol to be a speaker at this event.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion of Commissioner Krzyzanowski, seconded by Commissioner Weller, and unanimously carried, the Commission adjourned the meeting in loving memory of Ms. Demetria "Dedie" Ward, at 3:13 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Janet A. Neal, Chair
Richard Krzyzanowski, Vice-Chair
Mary Chambers
Alexia Teran
Kecia Weller, Treasurer
Wendy Welt
Steven Thompson

Excused Absence

Bernard Siegel
Sheila Wright

Unexcused Absence

Michael Gurekas
Harley Rubenstein

Board of Supervisors

Sandra Barbee, Division Chief
Martha Arana, Staff

County of Los Angeles

Kurt C. Hagen, OACC
Maya Lee, County Counsel

ASI

Richard Martindale-Essington
Teddie Joy-Remhild

Guests

Ray Louis McKeevor, Southern California Association of Deaf/Blind
Marvin White, Office of Consumer Affairs
Roxy Ortiz, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Magda Carrero, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Jessie Padilla, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Cyndi Ryan, Los Angeles County Office of Education
Sandy Eisenberg, Total Recall
Angela Simon, Inspection Supervisor, Housing HACLA City of Los Angeles
Lorraine Betts, Housing HACLA City of Los Angeles
Patty Snowfox, Housing HACLA City of Los Angeles
Carlton Lindo, OCA
Jessica Paul Martinez, Patients Rights
Deanna McNeally, Public Relations and Communication Manager,
City of Los Angeles, Department on Disability
Richard Ray, City of Los Angeles, Department on Disability
Susan Susman
Michael Agyin
Donna Dougherty
Linda Block
Donald Braude